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SENATE BILL 6539

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State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

By Senators McAuliffe, Shin, Jacobsen, Rasmussen, Tom, Murray, Hobbs, Pridemore, Regala, Kastama, Fraser, Fairley, Hatfield, and Eide

Read first time 01/17/08. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to polytechnic colleges; and amending RCW  
2 28B.10.056.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28B.10.056 and 2006 c 180 s 2 are each amended to read  
5 as follows:

6 (1) A state priority is established for institutions of higher  
7 education, including community colleges, to encourage growing numbers  
8 of enrollments and degrees in the fields of engineering, technology,  
9 biotechnology, sciences, computer sciences, and mathematics.

10 (2) In meeting this state priority, the legislature understands and  
11 recognizes that the demands of the economic marketplace and the desires  
12 of students are not always on parallel tracks. Therefore, institutions  
13 of higher education:

14 (a) Shall determine local student demand for programs in the fields  
15 of engineering, technology, biotechnology, sciences, computer sciences,  
16 and mathematics and submit findings and proposed alternatives to meet  
17 demand to the higher education coordinating board and the legislature  
18 by November 1, 2008; and

1       (b) May examine its instructional programs, costs, research  
2 initiatives, student enrollment characteristics, and regional context  
3 and make a recommendation by June 1, 2009, to the higher education  
4 coordinating board regarding the desirability and feasibility of a  
5 two-year or four-year degree-granting institution evolving into a  
6 four-year degree-granting institution of higher education with a  
7 polytechnic focus. The board shall analyze the recommendations of each  
8 campus in the context of statewide goals for higher education and  
9 provide policy options along with the original campus recommendations  
10 to the higher education and fiscal committees of the legislature by  
11 December 1, 2009. The board, after reviewing polytechnic institutions  
12 in other states, shall include in its report to the legislature a  
13 proposed model for a polytechnic-focused four-year institution of  
14 higher education that incorporates minimum standards and criteria for  
15 a polytechnic college curriculum.

16       (3) While it is understood that these areas of emphasis should not  
17 be the sole focus of institutions of higher education. It is the  
18 intent of the legislature that steady progress in these areas occur.  
19 The higher education coordinating board shall track and report progress  
20 in the fields of engineering, technology, biotechnology, sciences,  
21 computer sciences, and mathematics including, but not limited to, the  
22 following information:

23       (a) The number of students enrolled in these fields on a biennial  
24 basis;

25       (b) The number of associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees  
26 conferred in these fields on a biennial basis;

27       (c) The amount of expenditures in enrollment and degree programs in  
28 these fields; and

29       (d) The number and type of public-private partnerships established  
30 relating to these fields among institutions of higher education,  
31 including community colleges, and leading corporations in Washington  
32 state.

33       (4) Institutions of higher education, including community colleges,  
34 shall be provided discretion and flexibility in achieving the  
35 objectives under this section. Examples of the types of institutional  
36 programs that may help achieve these objectives include, but are not  
37 limited to, establishment of institutes of technology, new polytechnic-  
38 based institutions, new divisions of existing institutions, and a

1 flexible array of delivery models, including face-to-face learning,  
2 interactive courses, internet-based offerings, and instruction on main  
3 campuses, branch campuses, and other educational centers.

4 (5) The legislature recognizes the global needs of the economic  
5 marketplace for technologically prepared graduates, and the  
6 relationship between technology industries and higher education.  
7 Institutions of higher education, including community colleges, are  
8 strongly urged to consider science, engineering, and technology program  
9 growth in areas of the state that exhibit a high concentration of  
10 aerospace, biotechnology, and technology industrial presence. Expanded  
11 science and technology programs can gain from the proximity of  
12 experienced and knowledgeable industry leaders, while industry can  
13 benefit from access to new sources of highly trained and educated  
14 graduates.

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